

**Opening Statement
Congresswoman Diane E. Watson
Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy,
and Human Resources**

Hearing entitled, "RU-486: Setting a Low Standard for Women's Health?"

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I applaud the Subcommittee for bringing this topic up to educate the American public. It is very important that the FDA, our drug watchdog agency, is engaged with the scientific community and the population-at-large in order to provide informed choices for the women of the United States.

Mifepristone, or RU-486, has been utilized for nearly two decades by women all over the globe. This drug provides an early abortion option that does not require surgery. It has been reported that since the FDA approved mifepristone in 2000, significantly more than half a million American women have used the medication.

Mr. Chairman let's be very clear during this hearing today. Ideological debate pro or anti

abortion is a discussion that we have been afforded the free speech right to talk about. Medical process and drug effectiveness should not be subject to any debate of that style. It is imperative to the health of our nation that Congress, the FDA, health care delivery professionals, the scientific community, and patients approach the utilization of any drug from an educated, scientifically tested, and unbiased perspective.

I am interested to hear the testimony of our witnesses. Oversight is a serious responsibility that we undertake on behalf of the American people. The use of RU-486 is a subject that must be treated with unbiased integrity and regard for the overall health of women. Four women have died of sepsis. All four were infected by the same type of bacteria. What does the medical and scientific community say to this situation? Is Mifeprex responsible? Our decisions should be based on education and scientific investigation.

I yield back my time.